

Assembly Bill No. 2300

CHAPTER 550

An act to amend, repeal, and add Section 124981 of, and to add Section 124982 to, the Health and Safety Code, relating to genetic counselors.

[Approved by Governor September 29, 2010. Filed with
Secretary of State September 29, 2010.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2300, Emmerson. Genetic counselors.

Existing law, the Hereditary Disorders Act, requires the State Department of Public Health to establish hereditary disorder programs, 100 specified, and to license master level genetic counselors and doctoral level geneticists. One of the requirements for licensure is that an individual demonstrate competence by an examination administered or approved by the department. Existing law prohibits an unlicensed person from using the title of genetic counselor.

This bill, beginning July 1, 2011, and until regulations are finalized by the department, would require the department to license genetic counselors who meet specified requirements and would allow the department to revoke licenses issued pursuant to these requirements upon the person losing certification by the American Board of Genetic Counseling or upon conviction of certain felonies, as defined. This bill would repeal these provisions as of January 1, 2014.

This bill would also require, on and after July 1, 2011, the department to issue a temporary genetic counselor license, valid for 24 months, to a person who meets all of the requirements for licensure except passing the above-described examination and who meets the requirements to apply for the examination and has applied, or plans to apply, for the examination, as specified, and who pays a fee of \$200. The bill would require a person working under a temporary genetic counselor license to work under the general supervision of a licensed genetic counselor or a licensed physician and surgeon. The bill would allow the department to revoke a temporary genetic counselor license upon the conviction of certain felonies, as defined.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 124981 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

124981. (a) No person shall use the title of genetic counselor unless the person has applied for and obtained a license from the department.

(b) The applicant for a genetic counselor license shall meet minimum qualifications that include, but are not limited to, both of the following:

(1) Has earned a master's degree or above from a program specializing in or having substantial course content in genetics.

(2) Has demonstrated competence by an examination administered or approved by the department.

(c) The license shall be valid for three years unless at any time during that period it is revoked or suspended. The license may be renewed prior to the expiration of the three-year period.

(d) To qualify to renew the license, a licenseholder shall have completed 45 hours of continuing education units during the three-year license renewal period. At least 30 hours of the continuing education units shall be in genetics.

(e) The license fee for an original license and license renewal shall not exceed two hundred dollars (\$200).

(f) Until the department has finalized regulations that are needed to implement subdivision (b), the department shall license, upon application and payment of the application fee specified in subdivision (e), a genetic counselor applicant who meets the requirements of subdivision (b), is currently credentialed and in good standing with the American Board of Genetic Counseling, and has no history of disciplinary action by the board. When the department has finalized the regulations needed to implement subdivision (b), genetic counselors who have received a license pursuant to this subdivision shall be subject to the regulations implementing this section and Sections 124980 and 124982, and this subdivision shall become inoperative.

(g) The department may revoke the license of a genetic counselor who is licensed pursuant to subdivision (f) if either of the following occur:

(1) The counselor loses his or her credential granted by the American Board of Genetic Counseling or is placed on probationary status.

(2) The counselor has been convicted of a felony charge that is substantially related to the qualifications, functions, or duties of a genetic counselor. A plea of guilty or nolo contendere to a felony charge shall be deemed a conviction for the purposes of this paragraph.

(h) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2014, and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, that is enacted before January 1, 2014, deletes or extends that date.

(i) The amendments made to this section by the act adding this subdivision shall become operative on July 1, 2011.

SEC. 2. Section 124981 is added to the Health and Safety Code, to read:

124981. (a) No person shall use the title of genetic counselor unless the person has applied for and obtained a license from the department.

(b) The applicant for a genetic counselor license shall meet minimum qualifications that include, but are not limited to, both of the following:

(1) Has earned a master's degree or above from a program specializing in or having substantial course content in genetics.

(2) Has demonstrated competence by an examination administered or approved by the department.

(c) The license shall be valid for three years unless at any time during that period it is revoked or suspended. The license may be renewed prior to the expiration of the three-year period.

(d) To qualify to renew the license, a licenseholder shall have completed 45 hours of continuing education units during the three-year license renewal period. At least 30 hours of the continuing education units shall be in genetics.

(e) The license fee for an original license and license renewal shall not exceed two hundred dollars (\$200).

(f) This section shall become operative on January 1, 2014.

SEC. 3. Section 124982 is added to the Health and Safety Code, to read:

124982. (a) The department shall issue a temporary genetic counselor license to a person to practice as a licensed genetic counselor who meets all of the following:

(1) The requirements for licensure set forth in subdivision (b) of Section 124981, except passing the certification examination as required by paragraph (2) of subdivision (b) of Section 124981.

(2) Either of the following requirements:

(A) The person meets the requirements to apply for and has applied for the first available certification examination offered. The department may require an applicant for a temporary genetic counselor license to provide documentation of acceptance for the examination.

(B) The person meets the requirements to apply for the certification examination and plans to apply to sit for the examination in the year following the year of the first available examination. The department shall require the applicant to provide documentation showing registration for the examination, when the documentation is received by the applicant. After the applicant takes the exam, the department shall require the applicant to provide documentation showing that the applicant took the examination.

(3) Payment of a fee of two hundred dollars (\$200).

(b) A temporary genetic counselor license shall be valid for 24 months and shall not be extended or renewed.

(c) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), a temporary license issued pursuant to this section shall expire upon any of the following events, whichever occurs earlier:

(1) The issuance of a license pursuant to Section 124981.

(2) Thirty days after notification of the department that an applicant has failed the certification examination.

(3) The expiration date on the temporary license.

(d) A person holding a temporary genetic counselor license issued pursuant to this section, shall be required to work under the supervision of a licensed genetic counselor or a licensed physician and surgeon.

(e) The department may revoke the temporary license of a genetic counselor licensed pursuant to this section if the person has been convicted of a felony charge that is substantially related to the qualifications, functions,

or duties of a genetic counselor. A plea of guilty or nolo contendere to a felony charge shall be deemed a conviction for the purposes of this subdivision.

(f) This section shall become operative on July 1, 2011.

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